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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – During Christmas time, people decorate their homes and businesses with traditional Christmas trees, strings of colored lights, and candles but these brightly colored decorations can prove deadly in a residence fire.

Using these safety tips can easily prevent Christmas fires:

- Don't ever leave your home or apartment without cutting off all decorative lights.
- Do not overload wall outlets with the use of extension cords.
- Don't allow lights to come in contact with drapes or curtains.
- When using lights on the outside of your home, be very careful that there are no breaks in the wiring, that all light sockets are clean and rust free, and that you don't secure the cords to your house with nails.
- Winter dampness will also take a toll on outdoor lights and wires. Throw away any defective lights. Don't try to use them "just one more time."
- Fireplace fires, chimney fires, and roof fires are very common when people attempt to burn wrapping paper and tree cuttings. The wrappings burn furiously and the fireplace may not be big enough to contain flying sparks.

Christmas trees can be highly flammable. When you buy a tree, make sure it is not more than a week old. Check the tree to make sure it is not dried out. The needles should be moist, and there should not be any sap at the stump.

Don't put the tree near any source of heat or open flame. Heated rooms will dry trees out very rapidly, so make sure you water Christmas trees adequately. When you set up your tree, don't place it where it will block a doorway. If it does catch fire, you'll need a way out.

Try not to leave young children or animals alone in the room with a Christmas tree. Toddlers may pull the tree down and animals may knock it over. Don't ever decorate your Christmas tree with candles. Lighted candles have no place on Christmas trees.